



# Congressman Tim Bishop

*FIRST DISTRICT -- NEW YORK*

## NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **BISHOP, LOCAL OFFICIALS LAUNCH FORGE RIVER ARMY CORPS STUDY**

*Study was authorized by Bishop's legislation*

**PHOTO AVAILABLE:** A high resolution photo of the press conference can be downloaded for printing at [http://www.flickr.com/photo\\_zoom.gne?id=1525291843&size=o](http://www.flickr.com/photo_zoom.gne?id=1525291843&size=o).

Mastic, New York—Today, Congressman Tim Bishop (NY-1) was joined by local officials and environmental advocates to mark the launch of a critical U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Reconnaissance Study of the severely polluted Forge River. The \$100,000 study will assess environmental problems and determine if there is a federal interest in conducting an environmental restoration project, as well as what local resources are available to partner with federal agencies.

"The Forge is a tragic victim of chemical abuse. Its health has been wrecked by too many chemicals and other forms of pollution," said Bishop, a member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee, who successfully passed legislation to authorize the study last year. "When the dead fish appear to outnumber the live ones, decisive action is clearly needed. I was pleased to authorize this study and trust that the Army Corps of Engineers will work tirelessly to help enable the Forge River to make a full recovery."

"The Forge River is a local jewel that has served boaters, anglers, and nearby homeowners for decades," said Senator Charles Schumer in a written statement. "But with pollution badly damaging the health of the Forge, I have been working with Congressman Bishop to bring federal resources to restore the river's vitality and environmental quality. We need to clean up the Forge River and we need to do it now."

Congressman Bishop was joined for the event at the Forge River Marina by several elected leaders, including Brookhaven Town Supervisor Brian X. Foley, Town Councilwoman Carol Bissonette, New York State Assemblyman Fred Thiele, Suffolk County Legislator Kate Browning and former Town Councilman Ed Hennessey. The Reconnaissance Study is a fully-funded federal study, which will determine the federal government's interest in protecting the Forge River. According to Corps officials, the study should take approximately 4-6 months.

"The fact that the federal government has responded so quickly to the call to protect the Forge River speaks volumes about Congressman Bishop's work on our behalf," said Foley. "I am very

pleased that the Army Corps of Engineers is looking outside the box to find ways to protect our waterways."

"The resources the Army Corps brings to the future of the Forge River are invaluable," said Browning. "I am calling for the State, County and Town to meet in order to work out the details of how we will proceed with the Army Corps once the reconnaissance report is complete. We must not squander the opportunity we have to utilize their expertise and the potential that exists for additional Federal resources for eventual construction towards ecosystem restoration."

"In order to understand how to fix a problem, we need to fully understand it," said Peter Scully, Regional Administrator, New York Department of Environmental Conservation. "Fortunately, thanks to the work that has already taken place, the Corps of Engineers will not be starting from scratch."

"We would like to commend Congressman Bishop for his continued support of the plight of the Forge River and for putting the Forge River on the federal radar," added Skip Rooney, Vice President of Save the Forge River, Inc.

Following the kickoff event, Stephen Couch from the Army Corps of Engineers Planning Division participated in a meeting at the Mastic Fire Department with the Forge River Task Force's Technical Subcommittee where he discussed the federal process and learned about what technical information has already been gathered, which can then be used to advance the Corps' study. Assuming a positive outcome in the Reconnaissance Study, the next step in the federal process would be a Feasibility Study to outline the parameters of a project to restore the river's health. By law, that study would need a 50-50 federal-local cost-sharing agreement.

Polluted by increasing runoff over several decades, the Forge River has become nearly uninhabitable to wildlife. In response, environmental advocates – led by Save the Forge River and the Peconic Baykeeper – have mobilized to protect the Forge.

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